

## Message Text

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DRAFTED BY:AF/C:RRSTRAND

APPROVED BY:AF/C:WLCUTLER

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R 080028Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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FOLLOWING REPEAT KINSHASA 1073 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO LUSAKA,  
KIGALI, BUJUMBURA, BRUSSELS, BUKAVU & LUBUMBASHI DATED 5  
FEBRUARY 1975:

QTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KINSHASA 1073

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CG, PINT

SUBJ: CHURCH-STATE: MOBUTU'S FEBRUARY 1 SPEECH

REF: A. STATE 025112 B. KINSHASA 984 C. KINSHASA 769

1. IN FEBRUARY 1 SPEECH MOBUTU THREATENED CLOSURE ONLY  
THOSE CHURCHES WHERE POLITICS DISCUSSED OR TRACTS DISTRI-  
BUTED (REF B). WARNING AIMED SQUARELY AT CATHOLICS, AND  
SPECIFICALLY AT BISHOPS' JANUARY 15-16 STATEMENTS (REF C).  
IN CLEAR MOVE TO ISOLATE BISHOPS FURTHER, MOBUTU DREW  
FAVORABLE CONTRAST BETWEEN BEHAVIOR PROTESTANT/KIMBANGUIST  
PASTORS AND THAT OF ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY. IN FACT,  
INDIVIDUAL PROTESTANT CHURCHMEN (MISSIONARIES IN PARTICULAR)  
HAVE BEEN MORE DISCREET THAN CATHOLICS IN VOICING  
CRITICISM, ALTHOUGH THEY TOO ARE GREATLY CONCERNED  
REGARDING MOTIVES UNDERLYING RECENT RADICALIZATION

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MEASURES. THEY HAVE TAKEN SOME COMFORT FROM FACT

THAT MOBUTU HAS REPEATEDLY SAID THAT RELIGION IN ZAIRE IS MATTER FOR FREE INDIVIDUAL CHOICE, THAT CHURCHES ENJOY FREEDOM NECESSARY TO DO THEIR PROPER WORK (PREACH GOSPEL), BUT THAT THEY MUST STAY CLEAR OF POLITICS.

2. ONLY MISSIONARY ACTIVITY PRESENTLY AFFECTED BY NEW RADICALIZATION MEASURES IS EDUCATION. MOST MISSIONARIES ACCEPT NATIONALIZATION OF SCHOOLS IN PRINCIPLE, ALTHOUGH THEY SEE SOME PROBLEMS REGARDING PROPERTIES FINANCED IN WHOLE OR PART WITH CHURCH/MISSION FUNDS. MOST PASTORS SEEM TO PREFER TO STICK STRICTLY TO EVANGELIZATION - WHICH THEY THEMSELVES REGARD AS THEIR PROPER WORK - AND DO NOT SEE MAJOR OBSTACLE IN CARRYING ON AWAY FROM SCHOOL. SOME FEAR, HOWEVER, THAT BAN ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER OF NURSERY SCHOOLS, AND PROHIBITION AGAINST ANY FORM OF INDOCTRINATION OTHER THAN MOBUTISM FORESHADOW EFFORT TO EQUATE CHRISTIANITY WITH "MENTAL ALIENATION", BODING ILL FOR FUTURE OF MISSIONARY WORK IN ZAIRE. THIS APPREHENSION IS UNDERSTANDABLE, PARTICULARLY AS CONCERNS LONG TERM; BUT FOR MOMENT EMBASSY SEES NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR CHURCHES WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT AND AVOID ANY ACTIVITY WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS CRITICAL OF MOBUTU OR THE MPR.

3. WE HAVE NO FIRM INDICATION AS YET THAT GOZ PLANS TAKEOVER OF MISSIONARY HOSPITALS OR CLINICS, BUT THIS MAY BE IN THE CARDS. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH SCHEME NOW UNDER STUDY. OUR CONTACTS WITH OFFICIALS CONCERNED IN THAT PROJECT LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT GOZ IS WELL AWARE OF IMPORTANCE OF ASSURING PROPER STAFFING OF ITS PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS. ADMITTEDLY, THIS IS NOT MUCH REASSURANCE FOR FREE METHODIST CHURCHES. WE CAN SAY, HOWEVER, THAT, BASED ON MOBUTU'S PAST DEMONSTRATIONS OF GOODWILL TOWARDS MISSIONARY MEDICAL PROGRAMS, OUR BEST GUESS IS THAT HUMANITARIAN INVESTMENT IN NUNDU HOSPITAL PROJECT WOULD NOT BE MONEY WASTED. HINTON UNQTE KISSINGER

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